

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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US MISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 16303

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, FR, XS, IT

SUBJECT: US-EC ENERGY RELATIONS

REF: PARIS 27637

SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE GOI STRONGLY DESIRES COMPROMISE BETWEEN
US/GOF VIEW ON PRODUCER-CONSUMER RELATIONS. WE SUPPORT
RECOMMENDATIONS THAT A COMPROMISE BE SOUGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. WE SECOND EMBASSY PARIS RECOMMENDATION IN REFTEL THAT USG
SEEK COMPROMISE BETWEEN FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR PROMPT PRODUCER-
CONSUMER CONFERENCE AND US VIEWS THAT TIME IS NOT RIGHT, IN EX-
CHANGE FOR EVENTUAL FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN IEA.

2. ITALIANS AT HIGH OFFICIAL LEVEL ARE VERY MUCH WITH US. THEY
ACCEPT AND WELCOME THE LEADERSHIP WHICH USG HAS PROVIDED AND
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SHARE OUR VIEW ON CONSUMER SOLIDARITY, AND AGREE THAT IN PRESENT

CONDITIONS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRODUCERS ARE PREMATURE. THEY VIEW FRENCH PROPOSAL AS AN DISRUPTIVE EXAMPLE OF FRENCH NATIONALISM AND UNWILLINGNESS EITHER TO ACCEPT US LEADERSHIP OR TO SACRIFICE ANY DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE NAME OF CONSUMER SOLIDARITY.

3. AT THE HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL, VIEWS ARE LESS CLEAR. IN KEEPING WITH ITS TRADITIONAL POLICY OF SEEKING TO ACCOMODATE BOTH FRENCH AND US VIEWS, GOI IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE PROSPECT OF HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN US AND FRENCH ENERGY SCENARIOS. THEY ALSO KEENLY DESIRE TO SEE THE COMMUNITY FUNCTION AS AN INSTITUTION IN THE ENERGY FIELD WHICH FRENCH ARE, OF COURSE, BLOCKING.

4. FURTHER, ITALIAN FEELING OF EXPOSURE AND ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY TO ARABS IS HEIGHTENED BY PRESENT AND POTENTIAL ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. THE IEP AND THE PROSPECT OF ACCESS WITH THE OECD RECYCLING FACILITY WILL GIVE THEM SOME ENCOURAGEMENT. THESE TWO FACILITIES IN THEMSELVES PROBABLY SUFFICE TO WIN THEM TO THE US VIEW, BUT THEY DREAD THE APPEARANCE OF CONFRONTATION WITH PRODUCERS.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, ITALY WOULD SEE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES FOR IEP/IEA, EC AND CONSUMERS AS A WHOLE IF FRENCH COULD BE BROUGHT IN ON A BASIS OF A COMPROMISE. OUR FEELING IS THAT IF THE GAP BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE US CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY BRIDGED - AND WE HAVE NO VIEW AS TO WHETHER THIS IS POSSIBLE - IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ALL CONCERNED.VOLPE

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